

# How you can help protect Lake of the Woods

**TIPS**

No single act by any one person can save a lake. But all of us, doing simple things, can have an impact – a little bit at a time. If we all commit to making small changes – such as conserving water, maintaining our septic systems and using fewer phosphorus-containing household products – we can have a tremendous collective impact. There are many simple acts that can make a difference:

**1**

## **Maintain and Protect Your Septic System**

Pump your tank regularly (generally every three to five years)

Inspect your septic field regularly. (Wet areas, sewage smells and excessive vegetation growth could mean the field is overloaded or failing; if so, repair as soon as possible.)

Do not put food, compost, grease, bleach, harsh cleansers, paints, solvents, pesticides or toxic chemicals in your system

Conserve water to reduce the amount going into your septic system

Keep trees, shrubs and heavy equipment away from your septic field

**2**

## **Use Phosphate-Free Soaps and Detergents**

Use phosphate-free, chlorine-free, biodegradable soap, shampoo, household cleaning products and detergents



**3**

## **Be an Environmentally Friendly Boater**

Maintain your engine and inspect fuel lines, clamps and filters every month

Recycle spent fuel and oil at a hazardous waste facility

Clean your boat well (far from shore) when leaving the water

Store your grey water and black water until you can safely pump out your tank at a marina

Reduce wakes near shore to help reduce erosion



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**4****Be Waste Wise**

Buy only what you can use

Reduce and reuse before recycling everything possible

Avoid excess plastic packaging

Compost food scraps, leaves and weeds

**5****Minimize Your Water Use**

Install a recycling or reuse system for your bath, shower, dishwasher and washing machine water

Space out washing machine and dishwasher use over the week to reduce the load on your septic system

Install a water efficient toilet and flush only for “solid reasons”

Take short showers

**6****Burn Responsibly**

Manage waste in ways that do not involve burning it in burn barrels or fire pits, such as composting and chipping

**7****Be a Green Gardener**

Have a green and healthy lawn and garden without pesticides

Do not use synthetic fertilizers

Use native plants, trees, groundcovers and minimize the size of your lawn

Maintain a buffer of vegetation between the shore and your lawn – shrubs and native grasses will absorb nutrients flowing towards shore and minimize what reaches the lake

**You Can Help**

You can make a difference in the future by taking steps now to help protect Lake of the Woods.

**Reduce Phosphorus Use**

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient that all living things need to thrive. However, too much phosphorus contributes to an unhealthy ecosystem.

Phosphorus comes from everyday human activities such as gardening and lawn care, farming, boating, septic systems, and the use and disposal of products that contain phosphorus in our homes.

When phosphorus enters waterways, it acts as a fertilizer, leading to overgrowth of algae, which can deplete the water's oxygen supply and diminish aquatic habitat. Large quantities of algae can be unsightly and affect the taste and odour of drinking water.

**For More Information**

Visit [www.ontario.ca/lakeofthewoods](http://www.ontario.ca/lakeofthewoods) or call 1 800 565 4923.

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